Characters

- *layla* an afro-american woman, 20-30. the visions, dreams & memories in this play are hers. she must be able to dance.

  night-life companions (n˙l˙c˙ — dream-memories):

  - *n˙l˙c˙ #1* young woman, should move well.
  - *n˙l˙c˙ #2* a woman.
  - *n˙l˙c˙ #3* older woman, should be able to sing.
  - *n˙l˙c˙ $4* a man, *layla*'s lover.
  - *n˙l˙c˙ #5* young man, should sing & move well.
  - *n˙l˙c˙ #6* a man, must be a dancer.

Act

this is a geography of whimsy, fantasy, memory & the night: a bedroom. the bedroom of layla ("born at night": arabic), an all-american colored girl. there is what furniture a bedroom might accommodate, though not too much of it. the most important thing is that a bedroom is suggested: the windows that overlook somewhere; an object that might be a bed; another that might be a night table. the mirrors that we see ourselves in/ comin in or goin out/ in our full regalia or in layers of our own sweat.

the walls of the bedroom are designed to permit at least one or two of the night-life companions (dream-memories) to enter or exit at will. they cd just as easily come from beneath the bed or behind curtains, from under a chair, etc˙, but that wd not be appropriate to the night-life of an adult, and layla is an adult when we begin.

aside from the night-life companions, layla also entertains a trio of musicians. the musicians sometimes reflect her consciousness, but more often than not, they side with the night-life interlopers, attempting to refine layla's perceptions of herself and her past.

(layla enters her bedroom, to music we will recognize as her theme song. she is obviously returning from a night at the disco. this is revealed by her clothing, the movements she makes (as if she were dancing alternately with 3 or 4 different partners), & by musical quotations laced thru her theme. the band enters virtually thru the walls, giving us the first instance of the presence of spirits & an attitude toward life that makes fantasies tangible. layla dances to recreate her evening & to explore her present feelings which include a sense of dislocation & confusion, for the disco is over & she is in her bedroom with 3 made-up musicians. layla takes notice of the audience. begins)

LAYLA

dontcha wanna be music/ dontcha wanna be music/ dontcha wanna be daybreak & ease into fog/ a cosmic event like sound/ & rain yah/ like rain like when a woman can walk down gold street feeling like she's moved to atlantis when the mine's been closed a hundred years & the only gold is music seepin thru fog it's what we call a marine intrusion interlopin visions & lost deities findin the way home cuz we dont recognize what's sacred anymore oh dontcha wanna be music n ease on into the fog/ like rain & sun/ like daybreak/ dontcha wanna be . . .

(the six night-life companions (n˙l˙c˙) enter thru the walls, chanting in unison at first)

n˙l˙c˙'s

(in unison)

she is trapped in black & white/ she is trapped in black & white

LAYLA

(to n˙l˙c˙'s; she is startled & defensive)

dontcha wanna be music & ease into the fog? dontcha wanna be like rain/ like a cosmic event . . .

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #2

she never thought people places or ideas were anything but black & white

(layla is overwhelmed by the visitors/ who take charge & begin to act out their stories)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

a macadam road & black bark trees singed grass in soot dirt & a house more like a cave/ she's black too not tar like but a shade lighter than the sky that envelops her legs while she walks/ headlights frighten her where she is from the sun is ochre & daylight no different from sleep/ her most serious problem is how to stop walking on this road the color of pitch/ this path slippin off exploration with long sticks leads nowhere/ she is trapped in black & white/ without shadows she cannot lean against anything/ the earth has no depth because she cannot hold it she cannot go away/ the horizon implies three dimensions

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

if she were to try to bump into a tree/ she wd go thru it unmarked/ no things have taste/ or weight/ she is as facile as air at 14 years old/ she wonders if anyone has penetrated the chiaroscuro of her life she is a deeper gray than the shutters of her house.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #2

her hair tangles the wind like billie holiday's voice/ her tears fall behind her blacker than her songs/ she follows these back to her house where she howls/ for anything red.

LAYLA

inside the cave i imagine i can cook something to eat/ but my hands dont work the skillet burns up/ my mother's smoke scars my arms/ my mouth blurts some phrase i wd have a fierce yellow but i dont know what that is.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

she tries to stumble on something to stop this charcoal life/ she goes from room to room like a tractor in the grapes of wrath/ but everything she touches gets blacker & more nondescript/ "that's it"/ she says

LAYLA

smudges/ i'm soft graphite i'm clumsy & reckless/ i'm a hazard to definitions

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #5

she threw herself on her bed & her sobs roused her so/ she began to beat the walls her fists matted the surface with grime/ she turned to the doors/ rubbin her face across the thresholds/ she created ebony blurs that she cdnt even reach less she leave a furrow of slate fingerprints/ she made things black

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

indistinguishable. only someone else accustomed to overwhelming darkness/ cd see her under the bed tryin not to wipe her tears she didnt want anything as black as the palms of her hands to touch her

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

she waz black enuf awready/ dawns held no surprises.

LAYLA

i feel like an oven

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

all black & crusty/ with a huge space to fill up with something/ she ate newspapers/ the black & white pages/ thinking news of the outside world wd soothe her hunger. but she started to eat her books/ even the gothic novels/ the frank yerby slaves/ made her ill/ but she chewed *foxes of harrow* & swallowed *mandingo*/ like her joy she had hidden these pages in a great box under her bed/ no one understood where the newspapers disappeared to/ but she knew it didnt matter/ cuz the outside world waz black & white & thin like where she lived. she cd read in the dark/ & eventually only ate *the new york times/* the newsprint of the *times* waznt cheap like local papers or gritty like the *philadelphia inquirer* but as she tore the pages/ HELP WANTED first/ then REAL ESTATE/ stuffing them in her mouth/ she never thought people places or ideas were anything but black & white/ no one printed books in colors/ plus she waznt sure what colors were/ till she discovered jesus/ on the radio/ the voice/ with cadence like her grandma's but deep / & husky.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

hello jesus/ jesus is with us tonite & there is a great light shining in yr soul.

LAYLA

amen/ amen.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #2

as jesus came closer to her heart the way the deep voice waz sayin/ she knew the sun waz yellow & warm/ cuz the sun got in her throat & pushed a brilliant glow of shout from her/ not only heaven/ but the world waz bathed in the gold of his love. she ran in the sunlight of herself thru the house praisin god/ lettin her laughter wash thru the darkness of night.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

& she stood in a arc of yellow so bright her mother came runnin to see what waz the matter/ even tho the child had laid a daffodil glaze to the whole house/ the mother cd not see jesus had released her to the warmth of herself. the mother waz cold/ & thought the rush of color from her daughter's mouth/ too blazing & niggardly for her household. no more deep voices on the radio.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

no/ jesus does not like noise/ & his light shines in the church & the blessing & the lord's prayer using trespasses/ not debts. we owe no debts.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #2

& the daffodils crawled back into the child's mouth but she never forgot again that even if jesus didnt hear her sayin hello/ something made her wanna say hello/ cuz she had a glowin inside her that changed the world. now she cd touch her face with the palms of her hands she usedta sit on/ those black hands now caressed her with forsythia delicacy her soul waz filled with daffodils/ tulips spread in her cheeks.

LAYLA

i waz growin beyond this singed & reluctant plane/ i discovered dimensions/ & hope.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

there are horizons. there are different dawns.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

not here/ but out there somewhere/ or maybe in my hands/ these black hands.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #5

the corn waz yellow/ under the heavy sheaths of husk the corn waz yellow/ as she was bright under the crust of herself. the sunrise was piqued with gold like her voice winding thru the limbs of trees on the thin road she no longer walked/ she sailed the gravel & the sticks she held as a mast for herself. at the door/ she drew in all this color. the spinach was ashen still & the grim boilin water for black teas/ greeted her with cackles, shrieks & ignorance of her tastes/ once under the bed & starving she let out a gust of light/ & lay it about her like other girls she didnt know might have lined up their dolls/ she studied the legs & arms of herself/ the hair & lips of herself/ before the burst of spirit let her hold herself.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

she had withdrawn from the hugs of her mother her father her grandmother & those other lil blk things who lived with her/ the sisters & brothers who had found no colors/ who still left huge slurs of gray all around/ she held herself in her light/ feeling sorry for the rest. if she let them near her/ they might smudge this precious secret/ this soft fire she waz/ she wd never do that/ she waz selfish she wd never even tell them there waz something more than black & white skinny lives & black & white shutters/ & black cries & white yelps/ she wd never tell them but/ as she thought these black & white thoughts/ she heard the lil blk things/ brothers & sisters/ making sounds like horses surrounded by coyotes/ sounds like Rodan & someone falling from a 16th floor thru the glass/ to sidewalks/ sounds like a crowd/ peering at smashed bodies.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

she ran/ she ran leaving blurts of yellow & smudges of gray thru the halls. everything she touched as she stumbled toward the noise waz golden & black/ she had forgotten to put her spirit back/ she ran into a wave of heat she had never felt/ a rush of scarlet came cross her body/ threw her over the porch to reach the ankle of one of the little black things. red/ she saw red/ & the lil black things' tears were orange as she grabbed their faces & her brightness wiped the fire from their brows/ they were charred now/ as thin scrawny cheap white men made down the road laughin out the windows of their thin scrawny truck.

n˙l˙c˙'s

(in unison)

niggahs/ niggahs/ go home/ go home/ niggahs!

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

the lil black things/ pulled to her & whimpered lil black whys/ "Why did those white men make red of our house/ why did those white men want to blacken even the white doors of our house/ why make fire of our trees/ & our legs/ why make fire/ why laugh at us/ say go home/ arent we home/ arent we home?"

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #2

she saw red. she saw senseless blazes in her arms. carrying the lil black things into the house/ the black & white house/ the smudges of children were a cocophony of colors. now they all knew/ if you can see black you can see/ yellow/ that softness/ that glow that wipes tears & holds close/ but holding soft & close/ means danger/ makes you see red/ to orange/ to make fury to champion the tendermost.

LAYLA

i drew the lil black things with me under my bed & wiped the scarlet stains from their mouths with the light of myself.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

even these smudges of children/ these lil black things/ cdnt dim the brightness of her. she cd tell them/ but even she didnt know why the thin scrawny white men in a truck laughin had made a fire/ to char these black limbs til they fell abt the fields/ like dry old leaves.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #2

she got too big to hide under her bed/ she didnt really want to hide any more. the warmth of her waz sought & cherished by the smudges of children/ even they shared the lil color they had dug from themselves/ the glow & the ravage of red/ the orange leaps that spattered cross the sky. there waz the thin black road & the frail charcoal of dusk here/ but morning breeze curved their lips & left the treasured azure hue of dreams on their cheeks. she grew to expect colors/ & the memories of acres of indistinguishable black mosses/ walls of shadow creepin between/ long thin steps/ her own dark paths/ & the hungers she knew that opaque night the thin white men in a truck/ spread sick crimson round her mouth/ the blue of dream in her arms/ these violet memories rounded her body so/ gave depth to her gaze. she waz too full for black & white & skinny life besides/ her eyes were chestnut brown.

(throughout the telling of the story of the black & white two-dimensional planes, the night-life companions have been as mobile as imaginable, coming & going freely thru the walls. they have also been assisted in the telling of their tale by the trio of musicians layla thought wd entertain her. layla's responses, in addition to the verbal ones, have been to dance what she knew of what they said/ or to reject it by repeating, "dontcha wanna be music & ease into fog," if the truths of the n˙l˙c˙'s came too close)

n˙l˙c˙'s

(in unison)

she waz too full for a black & white & skinny life she waz too full for a black & white & skinny life

LAYLA

(underneath them)

when a woman can walk down gold street feelin like she's moved to atlantis when the mine's been closed a hundred years & the only gold is music seepin thru fog it's what we call a marine intrusion. interlopin visions & lost deities/ findin the way home/ like thieves/ cuz we dont recognize what's sacred anymore

n˙l˙c˙'s

(in unison, under layla, as they exit)

remember what's sacred/ what's sacred anymore/ remember what's sacred/ anymore?

LAYLA

(cont'd)

women in big hats wit lilies behind their ears women in blk & white scarves dance on stairways with bougainvillea & clouds/ men in jeans & honest faces. music offers solace/ offers some kinda way to reach out/ to ring bells on gold street/ not tin pan alley but montezuma's preciousness/ a marine intrusion natural as tides/ learnin to pray. to give more of yrself than ya think ya have/ diggin below the bottom of what's possible/ & so clean/ like a expensive gangster/ a tibetan shaman's prophesy/ marine intrusion/ like wind like winds make fires/ make dust swirl make us catch ourselves/ fly against our will til we like it/ til we know we waz meant to soar/ to be free/ in truth/ in silence. more ourselves & music/ like a voice we cannot speak in/ a voice to move thru/ more than heart marine intrusion's a meteorological phenomenon/ like rain like rain & sun/ like c'mon c'mon the consequence of bein real/ unpredictable as the weather sure as the sun risin/ the sweet comeuppance of risk . . . if ya wear a lotus in yr hair/ it'll fly wit the horn to another space. marine intrusion movin soft movin strong/ you cant hurt ya. dontcha wanna be music/ dontcha wanna be/ dontcha wanna/ dontcha wanna be daybreak & ease into fog/ a cosmic event/ sound/ & rain. yeah/ like rain.

(layla is relieved that the excitement has ceased. she is alone again, having convinced us that we can join in her reveries. she becomes languid, and prepares for bed, i˙e˙, sleep. enter n˙l˙c˙ #4, the man who loves her)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

you drink continually from a scarlet wine glass & let yr brazziere straps slip/ round/ yr shoulders yr hair is acorns/ yr hair is like a bundle of dreads round up on themselves/ you sit on glass & look at us with eyes as unfamiliar as your simplicity. you rest your hands on light/ make yrself/ over & over you are your own mirror/ yr own déjà-vu/ i, yr accomplice. yr beauty is irreducible/ yr hair acorns.

LAYLA

(nonchalantly)

as a child i threw these brown concentric miracles to the bears in the park where colored children cd play/ as a child i knew acorns as toys/ as the ends of trees i cd not climb.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

yr hair is acorns/ you rest on glass/ quick as a sailboat heeling/ yr wine glass barely braizes yr lips/ vermelho tambem/ yr nails unpainted/ ridiculously inviting you sit here in carved glass/ in mirrors/ on light/ in sepia caves/ only i imagine/ i sleep near you you are not afraid of the dark/ the wine simply eases the flowers from

yr cheeks to my dreams/ the red goblet signals my white stallions to trot now/ we are ready for the vision/ we are the silk blossoms of the fica/ needin sun/ lil water/ daily care.

LAYLA

my feet get dirty sometimes/ i like to walk in soil.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

you sit on embroidered glass in a beige brazziere/ you can do without seashells.

LAYLA

i am sometimes naked/ but mostly i wear my past/ the pinafores & white socks that shamed me.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

this woman with acorn hair/ can be caressed can stimulate even men with leica eyes you drink "du vin blanc bon" on glass so old even white men approach with reverence. my lover/ the acorn hair woman.

LAYLA

how i've known myself among you.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

the one whose head cd not be touched/ the woman too tough to tossle & fling to the sky/ who rests on glass & mirrors/ light/ memory/ the woman with no red lights.

LAYLA

only a red glass/ full of love.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

a red glass so close to yr lips/ not unlike a kiss not at all like my lips/ but constant & always possible. you put yr hope where you can have it you sleep with me on laced glass/ in caves swollen with beauty/ i put my dreams in yr goblet.

LAYLA

i sleep more easily now/ my love in that scarlet cup.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

i can almost taste you/ my brazziere/ fallin from my shoulder. i almost believe/ you gave me this.

(layla looks hoping to see the man who loves her, but instead there are two women, very agitated & aggressive, coming toward her. layla tries to gather her clothes, crouches near what might be her bed)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

what are they gonna do/ take the windows & doors from our houses/ leave us lil boxes no man can enter for fear of electrocution/ bar us from the streets/ at threat of life imprisonment: alternative number 1: all the men

are locked in boxes with no windows & no doors/ we can come & go as we please/ at any hour/ any day.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

alternative number 2: all the men are sent to new jersey & the women's army air corps guards all tunnels & bridges/ airport, bus & train stations to make sure that no men invade the state during rape prevention month. since there are actually 50 states in the union/ i imagine we cd pair off & alternate during the year/ so at any time maybe some 25 states wd be free of rape for a month.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

all the yng men who go to cuba & come back with stories about how the yng women in cuba walk abt with no fear in their streets/ these yng men are sent out in the streets of new york with bull horns. they are given prime time 60-second spots to tell eyewitness news the story of how there is no rape in cuba. the city of new york supplies transportation for the thousands of women in the boxes/ or for the thousands of women waiting for the men to go to new jersey/ to go to cuba where rape is treason.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

women shd go everywhere in 2's after dark. women who dont have friends or want to take a walk alone/ have to stay in or getta police dog. also women walking alone/ or rather in 2's after dark/ must counter rumors that the only thing 2 women wd want to do without a man is to fuck each other/ in this case/ they are still preventing rape.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

self-defense classes are offered free by the state during working hours to all women. self-defense classes are given in the streets to all unemployed women. self-defense classes are mandatory for our children/ from age 3/ to prevent rape.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

every convicted rapist must be in a parade thru times square during rape prevention month. all the porno houses will be closed down during this parade/ no one shall be able to see any sexual violence/ there will be the annual rapists' parade instead.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

give us guns.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

unless the streets are made safe for us/ we shall call a general strike/ in factories/ at home/ at school. we shall say we cannot come to work/ it is not safe.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

rape victims are given prime time 60-second spots to say what happened to them. the governor/ the mayor/ & the entire city council will personally see the rape victim/ apologize for the municipal negligence/ the failure of the state to provide secure living space/ & the state pays for all debts incurred by the crime they survived. in addition/ all women who died or who demonstrated remarkable courage & integrity during rape attacks are given congressional medals of honor.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

or the purple heart.

n˙l˙c˙ #1 & 3

(in unison)

we shall have streets/ schools & monuments named after all these women & children/ they died for their country.

(n˙l˙c˙ #5 shouts as if he were a newsboy in the thirties)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #5

EXTRA EXTRA/ READ ALL ABOUT IT! EXTRA EXTRA/ REAL ALL ABOUT IT!

(cont'd, confidentially to the audience)

the *ny times* has never asked me what i think abt a goddamn thing. the *ny times* has never excused himself to take a leak no/ the *times* has never helped in times of need or offered his seat to a pregnant woman on the irt as a matter of fact at breakfast the *times* is quite rude interruptin conversations in any language unless i insist on sittin under the table so i cd talk to people's knees i've never been able to communicate with someone whose nose is in the *times*/ also i'd like to mention i've never seen the *times* dance can the *ny times* dance can the *times* get down i mean/ in habana/ everybody knows fidel can mambo a revolutionary rhumba/ if fidel can do it/ it cant be so hard to love yr people n keep in step/ at the same time/ everybody in the ford assembly line cd do it/ the folks in soweto cd do it/ i mean think n dance at the same time/ but i've never heard tell of the ny *times* takin notice of that moment when "CASTRO LEADS HABANA IN NATIONAL RHUMBA" just like they make no mention of the fact that jimmy carter cant dance to any rhythm known to man. (perhaps/ he cd do it on the moon/ that's aristocratic/ dont ya think/ not many people cd get there/ the secret service wdnt have much to do/ on the moon/ all white n barren n free of anybody who looks like me/ on the moon jimmy carter cd do a foxtrot or some peckerwood derivation thereof/ the ayatollah is very formal/ but brezhnev n carter cd have the first disco contest on the moon/ with afghanistan as the prize) still i wd like to get the *ny times* out of my social life the next time someone asks me if i have seen the paper/ i'll say/ i've seen more news than is fit to print & yes we have deliveries everyday/ discounts to households that understand the rhythm of our lives n speak colloquial universal language/ we go person to person/ block to block/ any way ya wanna get it any way ya wanna get it/ we got it EXTRA EXTRA READ ALL ABOUT IT: ZIMBABWE CELEBRATES FIFTY YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE EXTRA EXTRA READ ALL ABOUT IT: THOUSANDS OF WRITERS FLOCK TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FREE SPEECH IN ARGENTINA EXTRA EXTRA READ ALL ABOUT IT: WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS DENIED ENTRY TO THE UNITED STATES AS WAR CRIMINALS EXTRA EXTRA READ ALL ABOUT IT: NOT ONE AFRO-AMERICAN CHILD WHO CANT READ & WRITE/ CELEBRATION OF CAMPAIGN AGAINST NATIONAL ILLITERACY EPIDEMIC HELD IN BED-STUY that's how i see it, today. now that's the news that's fit to print. EXTRA EXTRA READ ALL ABOUT IT/ EXTRA EXTRA READ ALL ABOUT IT

(then fanfare hits like at the apollo for the james brown review. n˙l˙c˙ #5, who is an r&b star, enters — or rather, leaps in)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

can i have a word the word wid you like the spinners waz talkin bout a MIGHTY LOVE MIGHTY MIGHTY MIGHTY MIGHTY LOVE

LAYLA

that grabs me/ i'm thinkin black & realizin colored. cant stand no man to be callin me BABEE to my face

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

but if i hear some stylistics du-wah BETCHA BY GOLLY WOW to me/ dontcha know i wanna give it away! baby: YOU MAKE ME FEEL SO BRAND NEW . . . so brand new.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

& there's another strut i cant do widout: satiné suits & lamé cuffs/ volcano blue crepe shirts & heavy chests/ like muhammad ali gone & learned to charm a lady/ sweep a child to womanhood/ from the stage make mama scream/ & she dont know that man's name.

n˙l˙c˙'s & layla

(in unison, singing from WHY DO FOOLS FALL IN LOVE)

UE WAH UE WAH EU WAH OW HAAAAaaa

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

the audacity of the blues! rock me daddy/ roll me daddy rock n roll me at the bijou/ de uptown/ in soldan's gym saw jackie tear his shirt/ throw it to us/ smokey leanin over de lights/ sighin for us

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #5

oo OO ooooooo baby babeeeee. . . . .

n˙l˙c˙'s & layla

(in unison, singing)

LET ME BUILD YOU A CASTLE . . .

LAYLA

bring all the hornplayers i know/ gonna sing & shout like the babysitter's tryin to entertain us/

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

do the chicken. do the slop. chantels gonna chiffon & pearl appliqué theyselves all over dis room

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

(singing)

& MAYBE IF I PRAY EVERY DAY YOU'LL COME BACK TO ME

n˙l˙c˙'s & layla

(in unison)

& i'ma rock & i'ma roll

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

in all of them free music blues.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #5

joseph bowie knows what i'm talkin bout/ the art ensemble jumped the r&b train headin for saturn on saturday nite is colored/ i aint lyin

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

& them flyin capes/ exaggerated broken hearts/ teasin me when the drifters go down them railroad tracks there she goes

n˙l˙c's & layla

(in unison, singing)

THERE GOES MY BABY MOVIN ON DOWN THE LINE

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #5

archie & frank lowe/ whatchu blowin bout? there she goes there she goes.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

(singing)

IT'S A BLK & BLUE HOLIDAY

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #5

in atlantic city/ club harlem/ bein colored on the 4th of july!

n˙l˙c¨'s & layla

(in unison, singing)

& I'MA LOOKIN I'M LOOKIN I'M LOOKIN OH LOOKIN FOR A LOVE TO CALL MY OWN

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

& i aint particular/ what kinda guitar you got long as/ you can play me/ that song

LAYLA

rock me daddy roll me daddy bring me them rhythms & blues i'ma neo-afrikan lady BUT:

n˙l˙c¨'s & layla

(à la O˙ Redding SATISFACTION)

I GOTTA GOTTA GOTTAGOTTA

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #5

get me some rock & rollssss! c'mon albert/ where are you at

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

yeah, albert/ where are you at/ i'ma ride yr ribald squeal like chuck berry roosters in st˙ louis

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #5

sun-ra & horace/ bring all them heliotropical folks to this heah ROCK N ROLL PREVIEW

LAYLA

bring me some ol roots/ irresistible!

n˙l˙c˙'s & layla

(COME GO WITH ME)

BA DA DADA DADA DA DAD A DUMM

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #5

listen, cecil mcbee

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

listen heah/ ike turner got me all gainst the wall & i waznt goin nowhere

LAYLA

i waznt goin nowhere/ nowhere but home

n˙l˙c˙'s

i waznt goin nowhere . . . nowhere but home . . . i waznt goin nowhere . . .

LAYLA

YOU BETTAH TELL SOMEBODY TO MEET ME!

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

TELL SOMEBODY TO MEET ME & tell me somethin good . . . tell me that you love me YEAH bring a lil delfonics in yr smile

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

march clifford thornton all round in thru heah!

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

rock me daddy

LAYLA

roll me daddy

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #5

deliver yrself!

n˙l˙c˙'s & layla

(in unison, singing)

SO FIIIINE YEEAH MY BABY'S SO DOGGONE FINE

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

& free/ & sing it to me/ SING it to me

LAYLA

i'ma neo-afrikan lady/ but

n˙l˙c˙'s & layla

(singing)

I GOTTA GOTTA GOTTA GOT GOT GOTTA

LAYLA

i gotta have me some of that rock n roll for de new land.

(the company freezes. enter n˙l˙c˙ #2)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #2

we waz a house fulla chirren who waz fulla the dickens cordin to grandma. there waz me & my 2 sisters & my brother & my 2 cousins/ too smart for our own good & nothin but trouble for the ladies who looked after us while mama waz at work & papa went to the hospital.

(n˙l˙c˙'s begin to mime actions as described)

we cd watch little rock & eisenhower or american bandstand/ then wait til waz the day for colored at the Y/ or play beat-em-up in the yard. or wrestle wid the white boys from texas down the street. i usedta like to dig holes in damp ground & line the worms up on the sidewalk/ my brother liked to set things on fire/ & my sister liked to beat me up til i told on her/ then pull my top braid that wasnt pressed cuz it waz summer & a waste of money/ til some of my hair wd actually come out in her hand. my littlest sister liked to write "pussy" in nail polish behind the refrigerator/ & my cousins rode bikes

(n˙l˙c˙'s freeze)

up on the private catholic girls' school til the police came/ they waz only twelve/ but the officer saw my mama waznt no regular colored woman/ so he just warned her bout the attitude folks in st˙ louis had toward nigras/ & since she waz from the north & her chirren waznt "customed to tradition"/ he'd let it go on by. this time.

(n˙l˙c˙'s begin miming action)

well. we ran bernice off cuz she cdnt cook nothin but hard stiff grits & didnt 'low none of us to run up & down the stairs or rub the goldfish together. & she always tol mama when one of them fresh boys wd come by to talk to me on the front porch. but she never cd figure out which one of us waz stealin her change & buyin snickers & new jack sets

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

now/ which one of you is stealin my change/ & buyin snickers & new jack sets?

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #2

MAMA! BERNICE IS IMAGININ THINGS! so mama fired her.

(n˙l˙c˙'s improv gleeful goodbyes to n˙l˙c˙ #3; she exits. n˙l˙c˙'s move stage left & sit back to back, as if under a tree)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #2

there waz a tree in fronta the house

(she joins the group & sits)

alla us usedta sit by it & think of things to do. watch the earth roll under the clouds/ waz the only time we knew peace/ cuz in the house waz grandma

(n˙l˙c˙ #1 gets up, moves center. she is grandma)

raisin cain her own self/ cuz somebody rode down the street on the bike/ free-handed/ or somebody trampled Mr˙ noble's carnations & it waz one of us/ so there waznt no calm in the house/ til regina came.

(layla gets up, begins dance. she is regina)

doin the slop. listenin to tina turner. eavesdroppin on roscoe & regina when they slipped to the side porch & waz feelin on each other. regina waz a high-school drop-out/ but she waz pretty/ wid spit curls & big bangs over her eyes. & she wore tight skirts & bernard's ring on a chain round her neck. she took us to sumner high

(n˙l˙c˙'s rise, begin dancing)

where the baddest basketball team for colored waz/ to see smokey robinson & the miracles sing "shop around"/ & she let us dance on the stage. when regina waz wid us/ even grandma let us alone. she waz so busy seein to it that roscoe didnt stay long & regina didnt forget she waz a lady/ grandma forgot all about us.

(n˙l˙c˙'s mime learning to french kiss)

then/ in the middle of little willie john & regina's friends showin us how to "french kiss"/ grandma came lookin for her fan. & mama fired regina for bein a bad influence.

(n˙l˙c˙'s improv sad goodbyes to layla; she exits. the mime of actions continues)

the house got crazy. mama tryin to feed nine people & make lunches for five/ put each one of us at a different bus stop. cuz a integration/ none of us went to the neighborhood school/ my own school was 15 miles away/ so grandma tried to help/ & she got real nervous tryin to please mama/ & be in her room cryin cuz none of us

wd mind. waz all the time sassin her. forcin her to cut switches off the hedges to whip our legs/ when we waz the only granchirren she had. i had had just about enuf & ran off a couple of times. & Mr˙ robinson at the pharmacy by the trolley stop always called mama to tell her what line i got on/ & then the trolley driver wd stop & let a police on/ who took me back/ & i came home from Mrs˙ maureen's fulla beauty parlor gossip a child had no right to hear/ & when i tried to listen to blues on the radio/ somebody wd turn it off

(n˙l˙c˙ #5 mimes turning radio off; he is daddy)

& 'cuse me of tryin my best to be a niggah. so mama went away

(n˙l˙c˙ #3 exits)

for a while & daddy brushed our braids to a point like a dunce's cap & then patted them down. he gave us way too much money for lunch & tol grandma she waz overworkin her heart so he wd have to get someone to come in til mama figured out whether she waz comin back.

(n˙l˙c˙'s exit, except for #2)

it waz sposed to be a secret bout mama not bein sure whether she wanted to live wid us/ but i knew. & cuz i didnt want the others to worry & cuz they were becomin bothersome/ i didnt say nothin bout it. & when carrie came i figured everythin wd always be awright. now carrie waz a big woman/ bigger than any woman on my mama's side or daddy's/ even aunt marie who waz sposed to have talked in tongues & run a farm all by herself cdnt have been as big as carrie. & carrie straightened her hair so funny/ it made her look even bigger/ cuz she didnt curl it/ just ran a hot comb thru it/ so it pointed out in all directions/ like a white man's crew cut. & she had pierced ears/ like aunt mamie's who waz 90/ & the ears liked ta touch her shoulders/ they waz so long & narrow/ but more n alla that/ carrie wore two house dresses at the same time. one up til lunch & the other up til she went to her rooms on the top floor/ where the white folks who lived there before us/ left all this junk/ scrapbooks & crinolines & things. carrie tied her dresses wid a rope/ a real thick rope. not like one for hanging clothes/ but like one for makin a swing on a tree/ & she always wore it/ even when she changed house dresses. & carrie wdnt use none of the bathrooms/ even tho there oughtta have been enuf for her/ cuz there waz one on each floor/ but carrie usedta say/ she liked the latrine in the cellar cuz that's what her mama had in arkansas/ & that's where she went. of course, my mama didnt know that.

(n˙l˙c˙ #3 enters)

mama came home. we had a party. carrie started bein more proper/ not cursin or drinkin so much/ & never mentionin men anymore/ it just waznt the same/ but the house sure did run good. me & my sisters stopped fightin in the bed/ & i didnt run off/ the boys stopped stealin things/ & my brother started makin up songs like chuck berry steada burnin up every thing. we usedta play like we waz the shirelles & mama wd sing christian gospel songs

(n˙l˙c˙ #3 begins singing HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW)

like paul robeson/ not like the man at the church carrie took us to sometimes/ where we cd play tambourines & get a spirit. just bout the time vanita/ my very best friend/ got to wear stockings insteada anklets/ mama took us aside for a talk bout things women shd know/ & i checked everything she told me wid carrie. & carrie said mama waz almost right/ but it waznt necessary to keep yr dress down/ yr knees locked/ & yr head high/ all the time. just when some no good niggah came round did ya need to do alla that pre-cautionin. on fridays/ carrie stayed gone til monday mornin/ she came back just in time to help me get everybody's lunch together & make daddy's breakfast/ cuz mama

(n˙l˙c˙ #3 exits)

skipped that meal for her figure. & i waz gettin to be real important/ cuz carrie had shown me how to fix just about every thing we ate/ how to starch clothes/ & wax the crevices on the stairway/ how to clean crystal & silver/ what to say when some one called. i always usedta shout "mama, it's somebody colored," or, "daddy it's a white man"/ but carrie showed me how to be right/ & to sweep all under the bed & turn the blinds at midday so the sun wdnt bleach the furniture.

(n¨l¨c¨'s enter, begin miming the action)

so when carrie didnt come this one monday mornin, i figured i wd cover for her. i cda done a good job, too/ cept mama & grandma kept askin where waz carrie/ & wdnt let me do none of the stuff i knew how to do/ widout tellin me their way/ which waznt the way carrie showed me. so i got in a fight wid em/ & they cused me of bein a impudence & not havin respect. & as i waz movin the glasses outta the dishwasher/ to pour juice for us/ my dumb brother dropped his shoe he cdnt tie in between my legs/ & all the glasses shattered cross the floor

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

(holds her heart)

lord lord. please be careful.

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

(angry, ad lib cursing)

goddamn! watch what yr doin . . . look what you've done . . .

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #2

& mama waz cursin/ & the phone rang.

(all n¨l¨c¨'s except #2 & #3 freeze)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

carrie/ where are you?

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #2

i waz sweepin up the glass/ & carrie musta been goin round the bush/ cuz finally mama looked sick & said

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

JAIL! well/ why?

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #2

i know for sure carrie said "cuz i hadta cut a friend of mine" . . .

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

cut a friend of yrs? cut a friend of yrs! carrie. come pick up yr things & yr last check/ cuz there's no way in the world you cd expect me to let a criminal look after my chirren!

(n¨l¨c¨'s exit except #3, who stands frozen)

carrie musta come while we were at school/ when i came home alla her things were gone/ but i found some of the rope she usedta tie round her waist by the latrine downstairs in the cellar. my sisters & my brother & my cousins/ didnt even realize what had happened/ our losin carrie & all . . . & i never mentioned my feelins to mama/ cuz then she wd just remind me/ that i always pick the most niggerish people in the world to make my friends. & then she wd list mavis & freddie & charlenetta & linda susan (who waz really po white trash) so i didnt say nothin. i just took carrie's place in the house/ & did everythin like she wda/ cept i did use the regular bathrooms/ & prayed for her like she prayed for the one of her chirren waz most dead. cdnt see how anybody didnt know carrie wdnt cut nobody/ less they hurt her a whole lot. not less she hurt a whole lot. carrie wdnt cut nobody/ not less they hurt her a whole lot . . . i cdnt see . . .

(n¨l¨c¨ #2 exits, repeating last lines a little)

(n¨l¨c¨ #3 turns to exit; turns back, crosses downstage)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #3

it's not so good to be born a girl/ sometimes.

(she turns to exit again, & turns back)

that's why societies usedta throw us away/ or sell us/ or play with our vaginas/ cuz that's all girls were good for. at least women cd carry things & cook/ but to be born a girl is not good sometimes/ some places/ such abominable things cd happen to us. i wish it waz gd to be born a girl everywhere/ then i wd know for sure that no one wd be infibulated/ that's a word no one wants us to know. infibulation is sewing our vaginas up with cat-gut or weeds or nylon thread to insure our virginity. virginity insurance equals infibulation. that can also make it impossible for us to live thru labor/ make it impossible for the baby to live thru labor. infibulation lets us get infections that we cant mention/ cuz disease in the ovaries is a sign that we're dirty anyway/ so wash yrself/ cuz once infibulated we have to be cut open to have/ you know what/ the joy of the phallus/ that we may know nothing about/ ever/ especially if something else not good that happens to little girls happens: if we've been excised. had our labia removed with glass or scissors. if we've lost our clitoris because our pleasure is profane & the presence of our naturally evolved clitoris wd disrupt the very unnatural dynamic of polygamy. so with no clitoris/ no labia & infibulation/ we're sewn-up/ cut-up/ pared down & sore if not dead/ & oozing pus/ if not terrified that so much of our body waz wrong & did not belong on earth. such thoughts lead to a silence/ that hangs behind veils & straightjackets/ it really is not so good to be born a girl when we have to be infibulated, excised, clitorectomized & STILL be afraid to walk the streets or stay home at night. i'm so saddened that being born a girl makes it dangerous to attend midnight mass unescorted. some places if we're born girls & someone else who's very sick & weak & cruel/ attacks us & breaks our hymen/ we have to be killed/ sent away from our families/ forbidden to touch our children. these strange people who wound little girls are known as attackers/ molesters & rapists. they are known all over the world & are proliferating at a rapid rate. to be born a girl who will always have to worry not only abt the molesters/ the attackers & the rapists/ but also abt their peculiarities: does he stab too/ or shoot? does he carry an axe? does he spit on you? does he know if he doesnt drop sperm we cant prove we've been violated? these subtleties make being a girl too complex/ for some of us & we go crazy/ or never go anyplace. some of us have never had an open window or a walk alone, but sometimes our homes are not safe for us either. rapists & attackers & molesters are not strangers to everyone/ they are related to somebody/ & some of them like raping & molesting their family members better than a girl-child they don't know yet. this is called incest, & girl children are discouraged from revealing attacks from uncle or daddy/ cuz what wd mommy do? after all/ daddy may have seen to it that abortions were outlawed in his state/ so that mommy might have too many children to care abt some "fun" daddy might be having with the 2-yr-old/ she's a girl after all/ we have to get used to it. but infibulation, excision, clitorectomies, rape & incest are irrevocable life-deniers/ life stranglers

& disrespectful of natural elements. i wish these things wdnt happen anywhere anymore/ then i cd say it waz gd to be born a girl everywhere. even though gender is not destiny/ right now being born a girl is to be born threatened; i want being born a girl to be a cause for celebration/ cause for protection & nourishment of our birthright/ to live freely with passion/ knowing no fear that our species waz somehow incorrect. & we are now plagued with rapists & clitorectomies. we pay for being born girls/ but we owe no one anything/ not our labia, not our clitoris, not our lives. we are born girls to live to be women who live our own lives/ to live our lives. to have/ our lives/ to live. we are born girls/ to live to be women . . .

(n¨l¨c¨ #3 exits thru the walls/ n¨l¨c¨ #4 enters, searching for her)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

she waited on me on the 7th floor corner flat/ our children wanderin from room to room ghosts ghost children effie althea rosalie/ diphtheria deserted blonde colored girls/ bright-migrant children never runnin carolinian hills/ never utterin gullah accents/ slurrin words like bajans/ mountain folk/ they wandered rosalie althea effie/ in white lace dresses starched for the wake/ celebrated births on 52nd street swallowed/ like placenta/ when there is/ nothin else when you rear yr young in dark closets/ like a stray cat she waited on me by the door/ opened to auntie's room from my side of the family/ uncles from charleston/ a loyal bartender/ &/ children in bodies only hintin of ochre soil/ she lingered by the corrupted window by the fire escape/ soot-sprinkled plants laughed at her meticulous ventures/ washin sills/ diapers/ my carpenter's trousers. her hair/ languid in the nape of her neck a thick wad of soft nap/ above the mole/ she wanted a bob a fashionable diversion/ to save pushin thick braids off her chest while she leaned/ over steamin laundry/ the baby the father/ & the graves. she waited on me at the kitchen table/ heaped with buttered rice n okra/ heaped with linen napkins from the allendale wedding/ the children in bodies gorged themselves on halves of biscuits/ they prided themselves for lovin me/ the father/ & they waited. & she drew sketches of her mother/ who had died/ her sisters/ who had died her father who had died in jacksonville & left her to speak too proper for a workman/ too poor/ for somethin better & i waz solid/ waz handsome/ waz kind & delivered her north delivered her too many to suckle/ & still sass me. she waited/ her hair so heavy/ her head hung down to fondle the baby/ warm the baby/ move the baby from colored manhattan take the baby north to freedom/ to the bronx/ she waited for deliverance/ for me to return/ from tendin the fire/ from passin for irish/ from the bar where faster women rolled/ from the garveyites sneerin at pale niggahs all livin together in special wings of tenements/ she waited & she mumbled . . .

(n¨l¨c¨ #5 enters. he is the surviving son of the man speaking)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #5

she poured grease over turnip greens/ asked the haitian roomer to move/ for workin voodoo on the baby/ dyin/ from scarlet fever warm the baby/ pray/ save the child. he loved his own. he loved his own. she sweat & brought breath to his blood. & he lied in the world/ looked over his shoulder/ every step/ to see the burnin cross/ feathers/ ruins of farms/ his father's tools. she waited by the bed/ fingerin his tuskegee photo/ the carpenter's shop/ the colored pioneers. the baby waz purple/ foamin at the mouth/ she waited for christ to reveal himself/ she sang/ compulsively/ to soothe the baby/ ease his entry/ the door never opened

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #4

i lay in the cellar/ fractured/ crumbled/ over uneven casing i crawled without my body/ thru sicilian ashes/ jewish cadavers moanin in the beams/ i crawled to my children rosalie althea effie in white lace dresses starched for the wake/ roamin from room to room/ swallowed like placenta my woman waitin/ receivin the spirits/ carolina screams branded up country slaves/ i made the journey/ to deliver her to freedom/ the carpenter/ tendin to his own/ movin north to the bronx.

(n˙l˙c˙ #4 exits)

(n˙l˙c˙ #1 and #6 enter with a burst of energy; n˙l˙c˙ #5 exits slowly. n˙l˙c˙ #1 addresses n˙l˙c˙ #6)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

shall we go to jonestown or the disco i cd ware red sequins or a burlap bag maybe it doesnt matter paradise is fulla surprises

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

& the floor of the disco changes colors/ like special species of vipers

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

no real musicians appear after 2:00 there is no dining out

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

shout hallelujah/ praise the lord!

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

but shall i go to jonestown or the disco? if jesus wont fix it/ the deejay will. my step is off or on my arms are sweatin in the spotlights twirlin or the sun

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

pick those tomatoes/ & join us in prayer!

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

a tango might excite the crowd a bolero give us salvation

n˙l˙c˙ #1 & #6

(in unison)

freak freak freak

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

maybe i shd really consider the blue silk every one at the office is looking for me on tv tonite/ if i win i might die/ jesus help me the kingdom comes

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

god moves in mysterious ways & koolaid is all we cd handle

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

even my aunt promised not to miss us our children will be so proud/ gd dancers are gd lovers/ but shall i go to jonestown or the disco? good lovers get married/ god shares the covenant of marriage/ & marriage is the dance of life/ oh we get so happy/ we so happy it's sin & we might die

n˙l˙c˙ #1 & #6

(in unison)

thank-you jesus

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

god loves bringing wealth from the wilderness

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

yes lord

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

at the disco we shout the praises of the almighty i wrap my arms around you til the end

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

are you ready/ are you ready to/ freak

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

we came here to feel good

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

thank-you jesus

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

to give joy & form to the world

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

thank-you jesus

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #1

we came here/ yes lord in our desire/ in hairshirts & satin yes/ oh to praise the power & the glory amylnitrate makes you wanna die/ or dance yrself to death amylnitrate makes you wanna die/ or dance yrself to death why go to jonestown/ amen/ i say why go to jonestown

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

yes lord/ i'ma go to the disco/ where i cd dance myself to death

n˙l˙c˙ #1 & #6

(own rhythms)

shout hallelujah/ praise the lord shout hallelujah/ praise the lord shout hallelujah/ praise the lord shout hallelujah/ praise the lord.

(n¨l¨c¨ #1 dances off)

NIGHT-LIFE COMPANION #6

elegance in the extreme/ gives style to the hours of coaxing warmth/ outta no where. elegant hoodlums/ elegant intellectuals/ elegant ornithologists elegant botanists/ but elegance in the extreme helps most the stranger who hesitates to give what there is for fear of unleashing madness (which is sometimes uninvolved in contemporary morés/ archetypal realities or graciousness). elegant cab drivers. elegant derelicts/ elegant surgeons/ elegant trash. elegant priests/ elegant dieticians/ elegant nymphomaniacs/ elegant discos/ elegant shoes/ elegant elevator operators/ elegnt salesmen/ elegant negroes . . . elegant/ elegant/ elegant! in the absence of extreme elegance/ madness can set right in like a burnin gauloise on japanese silk. though highly cultured/ even the silk must ask how to burn up discreetly. elegance. elegance. elegance.

(n¨l¨c¨'s enter & freeze, as layla begins offstage)

LAYLA

(o¨s¨)

i want to say these things to you/ mostly cuz yr not here. if you were here we wd kiss/ rub all denim thru . . . i speak to you a lot/ when i'm alone. i want to tell you i cannot stop smoking kools/ forget the militia in panama all brown & bald in gestapo boots . . .

(music begins as layla enters, surrounded by her night-life companions)

paradise has her own ugliness: the man on the boat from dusseldorf/ chasing me to dance with a "colored"/ the first in his life/ this my april in the north atlantic. at dusk the sea is sultry/ we are not her lovers & she treats us so. did you know i have so many secrets i believe are yrs/ what of me? i need you to have & still cant imagine you ever thot i wanted you to see the posters in rio/ guerilleros' faces taped to steel/ remind me of our struggle. we merge in our eccentricity/ this penchant for the right to live. peter tosh awready said: "everybody's talkin abt peace, i talkin abt justice"/ our kiss is desperate/ long awaited/ known immediately/ unequivocal & not enuf. tupac amaruo knew what to do. i imagine you in guadalajara on the back of a donkey/ the 3-yr-old pickpocket will seduce you. this is not the first time i've swallowed bad white wine/ i've been betrayed by escalators before/ no one knows you've planted here/ no one knows you find wine tricklin from my body/ our champagne still squirts from my braids/ even now i am not empty . . . such things i wd say/ tho cecil taylor long ago passed quevy station/ in the cemetery there i smelled myself in soil/ bitter & french/ dark & falling apart in my hand . . . i wd say to you/ a marimba might civilize me/ a fashion fair in bangkok suffocate my sense of style. jessica swears the yng men in manila dance well/ but have no minds. i want to hold you in this/ so you might know what i bring you/ my mouth is full & broad/ my tongue cluttered with syllables & desire/ even this has not come out straight/ so many days uprooted/ each time i fly i know again memory & desire are relentless/ when yr not here to talk to i speak my most precious/ lay out the mystery/ the devastation/ my honor/ i cant even catch yr eye/ so i trace the skies with/ these hidden things/ ces choses perdues/ that you might find me/ in the night/ when i am flying. i want to tell you i cannot stop smoking kools/ forget the militia in panama/ all brown & bald in gestapo boots/ dontcha wanna be music/ & ease into the fog dontcha wanna be like rain/ a cosmic event/ like sound . . .

(layla's night-life companions come alive & join her in the chant/ then slowly disappear thru the walls as layla goes back to sleep/ but the chant is heard as the lights fade)

END OF PLAY.